



DIRECT AND TELL VS. QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES

WHO OWNS THE LEARNING?



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Direct and Tell vs. Questioning Techniques

Key Points

When you complete this e-Book you will have an understanding of the difference between Direct and Tell and Questioning to Connection and when each is the best, most effective strategy. This understanding is fundamental to accelerate one's own performance and the performance of those we work with.

Terms/Glossary

- **Direct:** Direct is when you tell someone what to do and exactly how to do it.
- **Tell:** Tell is when you tell someone what to do. You inform them of the result that you want.
- **Open-ended Questions:** Questions that require a person to think. A wide range of answers is possible, and these will not include, "yes," "no," and "I don't know." Questions usually begin with "what" and "how."
- **Literal Questions:** Literal questions have answers that are found directly in the text.
- **Interpretive Questions:** Interpretive questions have answers that can be found by combining and interpreting several pieces of text.
- **Applied Questions:** These questions require the questioner to think about how the information will be used in other contexts.
- **Bloom's Taxonomy:** An order of questions that establishes six levels: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.



Prior Knowledge

We have all had the experience of looking for answers in a text book. We read the question, look for a few key words, and then look for the same words in text. Obviously, these questions don't require that we do much thinking. Think back to a time when you were in class that you were asked a question which really "forced" you to stop and really consider your answer. What was that question? How was it formed? What happened in you as you determined your answer? How can you apply this information to the questions that you ask youth?

Brain Power



Socrates was a teacher in ancient Greece. He answered the questions of his students by asking more questions? He believed in the power of questions as they promote thinking. A Chinese Proverb states: "He who asks a question is a fool for five minutes. He who does not ask a question, is a fool forever." What do you think of this Chinese Proverb? What about Socrates' point of view?

Introduction

While it is often easier to simply tell someone what to do, if we want ownership and buy-in to the activity and to the learning, the best way to ensure that this will occur is by asking questions. Learn about several ways to formulate questions and ask them to promote learning. This e-Book is entitled Direct and Tell vs. Questioning to Connection and discusses these two opposites.

Debrief

Are any of the terms in the glossary ones that you come across before? What do these mean to you when you think about applying them to your work in the after-school program?



Knowledge and Information

What is Direct and Tell?

Direct and Tell are strategies that we all employ to get someone to do what we want them to do in the way that we think will be the most effective. The difference between the two is the degree to which you inform someone of what they are to do. When you tell a person, adult or youth, to do something, you generally are conveying the end result that you want. For example, if I want the groceries to be brought into the kitchen from the car, I might tell someone (probably a youth) to bring the groceries in from the car and put them in the kitchen. At that point, the person would be given a certain amount of time to complete the task they've been instructed to do.



If the task is not being completed quickly enough, or not being done to a standard that is held by the person who instructed the other person on what to do, the "tell" can turn into a "direct." In a direct, there is no wiggle room in "how" the task will be completed. A direction will go

something like this: Go to the car and open the trunk. Take out two bags, one in each hand. Walk into the kitchen and place them on the counter at this spot. Return to the car and repeat until all of the groceries are in the kitchen. Do not stop to do anything else until all of the groceries are in. This should take you no more than 5 minutes.

Certainly there is more clarity around the task that is to be done when someone has been directive, but the fact is this: If you direct the "how" you own the success or failure of the task. If the task is successful, you can receive the "praise" for having orchestrated the task. If the task is unsuccessful, then you will receive the "blame" for having orchestrated the task incorrectly. The person who was directed can simply say, "I did what you said and it didn't work!" The initiative of the person is reduced to "wait to be told" and there is safety in that position because there is no ownership or buy-in.

Don't confuse direction with instruction. Direction is a one-way street. The director is the person in charge and the other person is an actor who is to do what he/she has been told. Instruction is a two-way street. You will share one way that something can be accomplished. You will invite questions. You will check in for understanding. Your goal in instruction is to release the responsibility of the task to the other person. Your goal in direction is to get the task done in your way.



At C4K we talk about going to "Sacramento." Sacramento is representative of the results or clear expectation that we are trying to accomplish. We believe that people need to understand "why" we are

going to Sacramento and how attaining that goal will be beneficial in accomplishing our vision and mission. We explore the expectation that we will arrive in Sacramento by a particular date with the stakeholders to be sure that everyone is clear about what we are trying to accomplish. Once the expectation is clear, then we will offer support as each member of the team decides how best to accomplish the goal on time. Think about literally going to Sacramento. You can go by plane, train, bus, car, horse, foot, and in some cases by boat. You can approach from the north, south, east or west. You can come on interstate or back roads. All of these are possible and viable ways to get to Sacramento. To create ownership and buy-in, the person charged with the task, must be able to choose the method.



You might be asked for advice, which you can offer, but you might want to consider asking questions until the person has decided on the best approach for them. There are questions you can ask which will help the person connect with the approach that meets their needs. One question you might ask is, “What will you want to do when you arrive in Sacramento?” This question will help the person think through what the end game in Sacramento is, and consider what they might need (transportation, place to stay, ability to move around easily, a place to have a large gathering), all of which could influence the way they choose to get to Sacramento. You might ask a question about how many people they believe need to make the journey and what would make the most sense from a budget perspective. Helping people think through the decision they make is promoting ownership and the desire to be successful.

There are times, in certain circumstances, that direct and tell work better than any other method. Two of these are when time is of the essence and you require absolute consistency in implementation. For example, if there is an earthquake and you are in a crowded theater, it is probably best to listen to the directions of a person who is telling you how to leave the theater rather than engaging in a question and answer session to determine the best way to leave. Time is of the essence and a direction giving approach is best. Another example is when you are creating uniforms for a team of people. The uniforms need to be identical and the best way to accomplish that is by giving detailed directions as to how those uniforms are to be constructed.

However, when these two considerations are not in play, and you need to create ownership and buy-in, you will want to employ a different strategy and ask questions and help people develop their own plan for moving forward.

Direct and Tell vs. Question to Connection can be in play with both staff and youth. For adults we often provide a training session, tell people what we want them to do, and when the result isn’t what we desire, we tell the person again, and again, and again, what it is that we want. Instead of employing the many different aspects of the Accountability Model (coaching, job shadowing, role modeling, and role play) we rely simply on the easiest of the strategies—directing and telling. For youth, what we do is “take over” the task and then translate for them what it is that they are to do. This is



particularly true during homework assistance. The adult will often pick up the child's homework, read the directions to themselves, return the homework assignment to the youth and tell them what they are to do. What we know is that with this kind of an approach, the person who has done the learning is the adult instead of the youth. No sooner do you walk away than the youth raises his/her hand again and wants you to come and tell them what to do next. Learning is not promoted. It is simply about getting the task done, not about developing independence and abilities.

Asking Questions

Asking questions sounds much easier than it really is. Asking questions requires you to understand some things about questions in general. One way we can look at questions is by considering them as open-ended or closed. An open-ended question requires the person to think in order to answer. A closed question allows the person to say, "yes," "no," or "I don't know." Let's say that it is Saturday morning and you have an opportunity to spend two hours with someone. If you ask a closed question you will ask, "Do you want to go to the mall?" The answer can be "yes," "no," or "I don't know." An open ended question would be, "I have about two hours, what would you like to do?" Now the person might answer that they want to go to the mall, but they could also say that they want to go for breakfast, to the park for a run, or just stay home and watch the program you recorded the other evening. The difference in the response is different.



Another way you can look at questions is to determine the type of answer you are trying to solicit. Is the answer literal, interpretive or applied? Dependent on which type of answer you are looking for, you will ask questions that will be appropriate for the response you are seeking. Here is a definition of these three types of questions.

Literal: Also known as "Right There" questions because the answer to this type of question can be found directly in the text. Literal questions are also referred to as "Reading the Lines." Literal question stems include:

Who is	Where is	List	What is	How many
When did	Name	What kind of		

Interpretive: Also known as "Think and Search" questions because the answer to this type of question is found within several pages/chapters of a text. Interpretive questions are also referred to as "Reading Between the Lines." Interpretive question stems include:

Summarize	What caused	Contrast	Retell	How did
Explain	Find two examples	For what reason	Compare	

Applied: Also known as ‘On My Own’ questions. This type of question cannot be found directly in the text. Applied questions are also referred to as “Reading Beyond the Lines.” Applied question stems include:

What do you think	Prove	Apply	Create	Initiate
Predict	What if	Solve	Evaluate	

Another way to think about questions is thinking in terms of Bloom’s Taxonomy. One of things we want to promote is youth asking the questions as well as answering them. One of the debriefing strategies is to ask each day, “What good questions did you ask today?” To help youth develop skills in asking questions we need to pay attention to the types of questions they are asking. When students ask questions they are involved in checking their own understanding of the material they have encountered. Expert scaffolding is essential for cognitive development as students move from spectator to performer after repeated modeling by adults.

Bloom’s Taxonomy is a way to classify instructional activities or **questions** as they progress in difficulty.



The lower levels require less in the way of thoughtfulness and insight, while the upper levels require the reader to fully engage in the process. As we move toward implementation of the Common Core standards, we will want to utilize all of the levels in Bloom’s Taxonomy. Below you will find a table for each of the six types of questions (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation). The table includes useful verbs that you can use, question starters, and a suggestion of activities and products that you might

want youth to produce.

Knowledge

Useful Verbs	Sample Question Stems	Potential activities and products
tell list describe relate locate write find state name	What happened after...? How many...? Who was it that...? Can you name the...? Describe what happened at...? Who spoke to...? Can you tell why...? Find the meaning of...? What is...? Which is true or false...?	Make a list of the main events.. Make a timeline of events. Make a facts chart. Write a list of any pieces of information you can remember. List all the in the story. Make a chart showing... Make an acrostic. Recite a poem.

Comprehension

Useful Verbs	Sample Question Stems	Potential activities and products
explain interpret outline discuss distinguish predict restate translate compare describe	Can you write in your own words...? Can you write a brief outline...? What do you think could have happened next...? Who do you think...? What was the main idea...? Who was the key character...? Can you distinguish between...? What differences exist between...? Can you provide an example of what you mean...? Can you provide a definition for...?	Cut out or draw pictures to show a particular event. Illustrate what you think the main idea was. Make a cartoon strip showing the sequence of events. Write and perform a play based on the story. Retell the story in your words. Paint a picture of some aspect you like. Write a summary report of an event. Prepare a flow chart to illustrate the sequence of events. Make a coloring book.

Application

Useful Verbs	Sample Question Stems	Potential activities and products
solve show use illustrate construct complete examine classify	Do you know another instance where...? Could this have happened in...? Can you group by characteristics such as...? What factors would you change if...? Can you apply the method used to some experience of your own...? What questions would you ask of...? From the information given, can you develop a set of instructions about...?	Construct a model to demonstrate how it will work. Make a diorama to illustrate an important event. Make a scrapbook about the areas of study. Make a paper-Mache map to include relevant information about an event. Take a collection of photographs to demonstrate a particular point. Make up a puzzle game using the ideas from the study area. Make a clay model of an item in the material. Design a market strategy for your product using a known strategy as a model. Dress a doll in national costume. Paint a mural using the same materials. Write a textbook about... for others.

Analysis

Useful Verbs	Sample Question Stems	Potential activities and products
analyze distinguish examine compare contrast investigate categorize identify explain separate advertise	Which events could have happened...? If ... happened, what might the ending have been? How was this similar to...? What was the underlying theme of...? What do you see as other possible outcomes? Why did ... changes occur? Can you compare your ... with that presented in...? Can you explain what must have happened when...? How is ... similar to ...? What are some of the problems of...? Can you distinguish between...? What were some of the motives behind...? What was the turning point in the game? What was the problem with...?	Design a questionnaire to gather information. Write a commercial to sell a new product. Conduct an investigation to produce information to support a view. Make a flow chart to show the critical stages. Construct a graph to illustrate selected information. Make a jigsaw puzzle. Make a family tree showing relationships. Put on a play about the study area. Write a biography of the study person. Prepare a report about the area of study. Arrange a party. Make all the arrangements and record the steps needed. Review a work of art in terms of form, color and texture.

Synthesis

Useful Verbs	Sample Question Stems	Potential activities and products
create invent compose predict plan construct design imagine propose devise formulate	Can you design a ... to ...? Why not compose a song about...? Can you see a possible solution to...? If you had access to all resources how would you deal with...? Why don't you devise your own way to deal with...? What would happen if...? How many ways can you...? Can you create new and unusual	Invent a machine to do a specific task. Design a building to house your study. Create a new product. Give it a name and plan a marketing campaign. Write about your feelings in relation to... Write a TV show, play, puppet show, role play, song or pantomime about...? Design a record, book, or magazine cover for...? Make up a new language code and write material using it. Sell an idea. Devise a way to...

	uses for...? Can you write a new recipe for a tasty dish? Can you develop a proposal which would...	Compose a rhythm or put new words to a known melody.
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Evaluation

Useful Verbs	Sample Question Stems	Potential Activities and Products
judge select choose decide justify debate verify argue recommend assess discuss rate prioritize determine	Is there a better solution to...? Judge the value of... Can you defend your position about...? Do you think ... is a good or a bad thing? How would you have handled...? What changes to ... would you recommend? Do you believe? Are you a ... person? How would you feel if...? How effective are...? What do you think about...?	Prepare a list of criteria to judge a ... show. Indicate priority and ratings. Conduct a debate about an issue of special interest. Make a booklet about 5 rules you see as important. Convince others. Form a panel to discuss views, e.g., "Learning at School." Write a letter to ... advising on changes needed at... Write a half yearly report. Prepare a case to present your view about...

Depth of Knowledge (DoK) Levels

With the advent of Common Core and the utilization of strategies directly utilized by Common Core, Bloom's Taxonomy has been superseded by Depth of Knowledge (DoK) Levels. Rather than the six types of questioning introduced by Bloom, DoK divides the intent of questions into four categories. Below you will see the four levels and some key words which are associated with each level.



Level 1: Recall and Reproduction

Key words: recall, recognize, match, se, name, tabulate, repeat, arrange, measure, illustrate, memorize, define, draw, identify, list, and the questions

who, what, when, where and why.

Bullet Points

- Directing means telling something exactly what they are to do, step by step, no wiggle room
- Telling means communicating the end result that you expect to be accomplished, no explanation, no checking for understanding, simply telling.
- Open-end questions allow people to formulate answers that can have a wide-range of responses. A closed question solicits “yes,” “no,” and “I don’t know,” responses.
- Questions can also be categorized as literal (right there), interpretive (combining several pages or documents), applied (how can the information be used).
- Bloom’s Taxonomy has six levels of questions: knowledge, comprehension, analysis, application, synthesis, and evaluation.
- Specific homework questions focus on what to ask before homework begins, during homework, and when youth are stuck.

C4K Minute—Keeping It Real

Make a list of at least three questions you can ask youth during the opening of your program. These questions will not need to be about a particular aspect of your program, but they can be ones to help the youth open up to you.

Debrief

What of the information that you read was a confirmation of something you already knew? What encouraged you to make an adjustment or tweak to your thinking? What, if any Aha did you have?



Level 2: Basic Skills and Concepts

Key words: graph, classify, cause/effect, relate, compare, estimate, summarize, show, interpret, predict, modify, organize, infer, categorize.

Level 3: Strategic Thinking and Reasoning

Key words: revise, assess, develop a logical argument, investigate, explain, critique, use concepts to solve non-routine problems, formulate, draw conclusions, hypothesize, differentiate.

Level 4: Extended Thinking

Key words: prove, analyze, synthesize, design, connect, apply concepts, critique, create.

Asking Questions During Homework

Since homework is such a critical part of after-school programming and asking questions is a critical part of supporting homework in an effective way, here are some questions that you might want to ask students during homework. The questions are categorized by when in the homework session the questions are to be asked:

Beginning of homework:

- What do the directions say?
- What did the teacher tell you in class?
- What do you think you are supposed to do in this assignment?

After students get started:

- What skills do you need to have to do this work?
- What (reading, math, and writing) do you need to be able to do?
- What strategies will you use to help you figure out the answer?
- What are the steps you need to take to find the answer?
- What will you do to check the correctness of your work?
- Which part of the assignment can you do?
- What is confusing to you?

If students get stuck:

- What do you think will happen if you try...?



Ultimately, asking questions until a person, adult or youth, has worked out the best strategy for them, is one of the ways we can ensure that everyone is learning. Use Direct and Tell only when absolutely necessary, otherwise, ask questions until the person makes the connection for themselves.

Review

Tricks of the Trade

Use a card with question starters written on them so you can refer to them when you are asking questions until you become comfortable asking them. This can be especially helpful for questions to ask during homework.

Gem of the Day

Once you've asked a question, be prepared to handle the silence that follows while youth are thinking and formulating a response. It is hard to provide an answer when you aren't used to being asked.

Important Take-Aways

Youth have had the most practice asking questions that request they "regurgitate" information with standard or "canned" comprehension. Asking questions at different levels of Bloom's Taxonomy or DoK is essential to support learning.



Troubleshooting

I struggle with asking questions. I tend to think that the answers are finite. What can I do to help me get past this?

Chances are that you are asking questions that are really requesting knowledge or comprehension. If you ask a knowledge-based question (What year did Columbus sail? What were the names of Columbus's three ships?) you are asking for finite answers. The same can be true for asking comprehension questions. Try asking questions with different stems using application, analysis, and other strategies.

Best Practices

- ✓ Think of your after-school program as a question path, moving from one question to another.
- ✓ Help youth look for great questions rather than right answers. The right answers will follow.
- ✓ Field questions by asking questions.

FAQ's

What do I do when I ask a question and all I get back is silence?

Sometimes the reason you are met with silence is that youth don't know what to say and they are nervous about answering questions aloud for everyone to hear. Try asking the question and having youth put "heads together." This will have one youth talking with another youth and deciding what

answer they will give collectively. This will give them a chance to talk through what they think and formulate the response.

Universal

Seek first to understand before seeking to be understood. The best way to find understanding is through asking questions. If you ask enough of them you will understand how people think and what they believe.

After-School

In after-school, asking questions is the foundation for helping youth accept the onus of responsibility for learning. Ultimately, learning is owned by the learner. Questions help the learner think more deeply.

Positional

As an after-school leader you are probably vested in making a difference in the lives of youth. One of the best ways to do this is by asking questions and probing for understanding.



Review

In your journal, write about the information you are taking away from this content. Highlight your key learnings

Key Learning

Since you have reviewed the material, ask yourself how you can translate the information into a learning for you, and then how will you practice that learning by implementing it or executing on a specific action. Think in terms of your personal and professional life. For example:

Personal: I have learned that I should work on asking questions that are open-ended rather than closed questions which end up with typical “yes” or “no” answers.

Professional: Asking questions during homework is an essential strategy for helping youth identify their own learning.

Journal Entry

I did this well and celebrated by _____.

I did not do so well at _____, and I will strengthen my performance in the future by doing _____.

Walk Through the Day

Pre-Pre-Opening: On your way to work consider which things are more focused on Direct and Tell and which things encourage you to ask questions. Consider how you might change a situation from a “Direct and Tell” forum to a “Question to Connection” scenario. Remember, some things are best left in the Direct and Tell motif.

Practical Application: When you are walking into sign-in for work, acknowledge the people you meet and instead of the perfunctory, “How are you?” ask a more meaningful question and then wait for an answer.

Pre-Opening: During the pre-opening while you are getting ready, engage your fellow staff members by asking questions. Figure out ways to ask questions so you can learn more about them, not to be manipulative but because you are interested in who they are and building a team.

Practical Application: Think about the “how are you” exchange. How can you make this exchange more meaningful? What is it really that you want to know? The Maasai tribe in Africa greet each other by asking the question, “How are the children?” How might this change our greeting exchange?

Opening: Engaging young people by asking questions about their social and emotional lives rather than the cognitive or academic components, is a way to build relationships with youth. Make an effort to spend time with each youth. Ask questions when it seems appropriate.

Practical Application: Start by asking simple questions. Look at the youth who is answering. Concentrate solely on them rather than thinking about who you will move to next. Listen empathetically to what they are telling you.

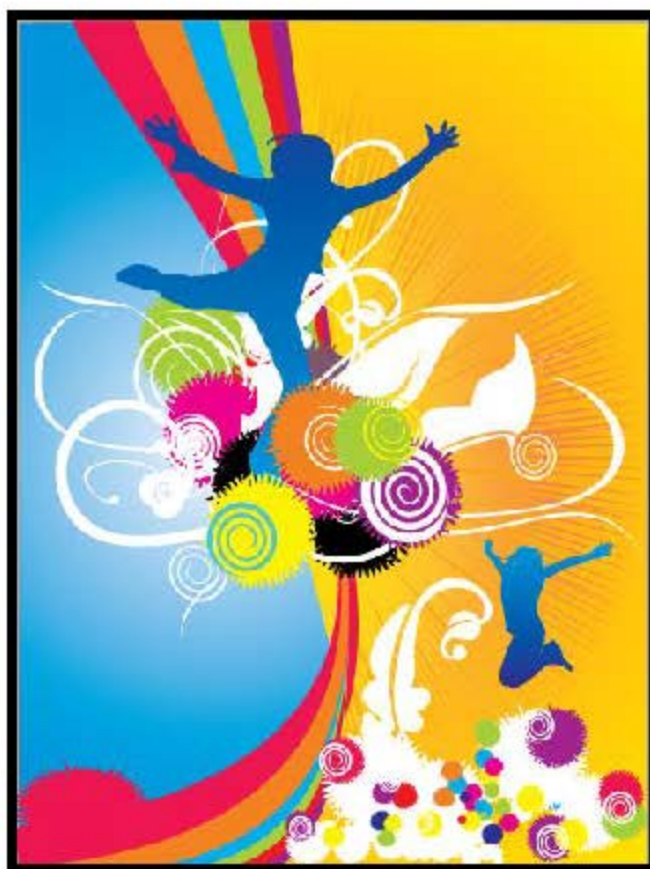


Rotations: During the rotations, you will be asking a number of questions to help youth accomplish certain tasks. Think through those questions prior to the lesson. Jot them down to ensure that you have them at your fingertips when you need them.

Practical Application: You are not the only person who can ask questions during your program. Have the youth practice asking questions of one another. You can do this by presenting a scenario that everyone can understand and then pairing students up to ask questions of one another. You might want to share different types of question starters with them to help them get started.

Closing: Checking in with youth during the Closing by asking questions about what they will do when they leave program, or whether or not they finished the homework, or you ask them what they’ve done to be prepared for tomorrow. Checking in through questions will help you learn more about the youth.

Practical Application: After greeting the parents, ask them about the day they've had. Really listen to what they have to say. As you learn more about what they do, you can ask questions that demonstrate that understanding. Be careful not to "grill" them, just ask questions to demonstrate your interest.



Connection to Online Instruction

Program Leader Videos

Special Techniques	Direct and Tell vs. Questioning
PL Class #6	Release of Responsibility to Youth
PL Class #5	Encouraging Student Leadership
PL Module #12	What Youth Can Do
PL Module #5	Effective Input from Students
PL Module #6	Effective Feedback from Students
PL Module #1	Ownership and Agreements
PL Mini #42	Student Monitors
PL Mini #16	Questioning Techniques
PL Mini #47	Questioning Strategies #2
PL Mini #38	Involving Students in Decision Making
PL Mini #76	Giving Kids Choice
PL Mini #127	I Am Capable
PL Mini #65	Getting Student Input

